

Washington, DC – Congressman Harry Teague will travel to Las Cruces Saturday, January 23<sup>rd</sup>, to host a roundtable discussion for veterans focused on military mental health services. The meeting will examine post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and mental health care in the military and how to best implement new provisions signed into law as part of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). They will also discuss other steps organizations may be taking to curb substance abuse and suicides in the military. Congressman Teague will be available to visit with media following the event.

In an effort to improve quality of life for returning combat veterans and ease the adjustment to civilian life, Congressman Teague introduced the Kyle Barthel Veterans and Service Members Mental Health Screening Act in May of 2009. The bill, named in honor of a Las Cruces man who struggled with PTSD and ultimately took his own life after returning from combat, called for mandatory and confidential mental health assessments for service members. In the fall of 2009, the NDAA established a mandatory post-deployment mental health assessment that provides face-to-face screening between a soldier and a mental health practitioner to all troops 60 days before deployment and upon returning from combat, a program Congressman Teague advocated for in his legislation. Congressman Teague is a member of the House Committee on Veteran's Affairs.

Last week, Congressman Teague held similar forums in Albuquerque, Roswell, and Carlsbad.

**\*For Media Only\***

**Las Cruces**

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WHAT: Veterans Mental Health Roundtable

WHERE: American Legion Post #10, 1185 E. Madrid

WHEN: Saturday, January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1:30 PM– 3:00 PM

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